



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA

Implementation and Outcomes of the Together is Better Program: 2022-23

Key Findings:

- Respondents were satisfied with the professional development and coaching support that Together is Better provided.
- A majority of respondents engaged in instructional and teaching practices to support EL students “almost always/daily” or “often/weekly” during the program year.
- Participants felt positively about their school’s approach to teaching EL students and their school’s approach to collaboration and professional development in support of EL students during the program year.
- Respondents expressed that all students, not just EL students, benefitted from co-teaching and collaboration.
- Challenges to co-teaching included adequate time for scheduling and planning, especially when working with multiple partners. Respondents also felt that there were not enough ESOL teachers for schools to use a co-teaching model.

Hannah Ingersoll, PhD

Associate, Strategic Analytics

Elisabeth Fornaro, PhD

Senior Research Associate

Office of Research and
Evaluation

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About Together is Better

Together is Better (TIB) is a program that supports the implementation of a co-teaching English Learner (EL) model in a small subset of District schools. In the TIB model, a general education teacher and an English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) teacher are paired to collaboratively teach (referred to as “co-teaching”) in a classroom that includes EL students. This practice of co-teaching provides embedded support to EL students, and ESOL-informed instruction to all students. TIB was facilitated by the Office of Multilingual Curriculum and Programs (OMCP) with the assistance of SupportEd, which offers professional development, coaching, and other resources to support educators of Multilingual Learners (MLs).¹ The work of SupportEd is framed around the following five guiding principles:^{2, 3}

1. ELs bring many strengths to the classroom.
2. ELs learn best when they are taught in a welcoming and supportive school climate.
3. ELs should be taught language and content simultaneously.
4. ELs benefit when their teachers collaborate to share their expertise.
5. ELs excel when their teachers leverage advocacy and leadership skills.

TIB participants received professional development in co-teaching to support ELs, which included embedded coaching to support teacher teams in their specific needs and structured collaborative planning time. Each co-teaching team received up to two two-hour coaching sessions during each quarter. In addition, Professional Development sessions (PDs) were held quarterly with all participating TIB teachers. PD sessions were centered on developing co-teachers' pedagogical expertise, knowledge, and application of the various co-teaching models, and asset-based instructional approaches that increase student access to language and content. Participants also developed their collaborative planning skills. PD topics included:

- building co-teaching relationships;
- co-teaching models;
- instructional coaching;
- oral language development;
- formative assessment;
- student self-assessment;
- early literacy for EL students;
- and instructional leadership and advocacy for EL students.

¹ For more information on SupportEd see: <https://supported.com/>

² Diane Staehr Fenner and Sydney Snyder, *Unlocking English Learners' Potential: Strategies for Making Content Accessible* (Thousand Oaks: Corwin, 2017).

³ More information on SupportEd's five essential guiding principles can be found here: <https://supported.com/about/framework-for-multilingual-learner-education/>

The TIB program was initially piloted as a three-year initiative, with one year of planning and two consecutive years of programming. Planning began during the 2017-18 school year. Three schools participated in the 2017-18 planning year, but one withdrew from the program, leaving two schools, William H. Loesche Elementary School and Sheridan Elementary School (now Gloria Casarez Elementary School) participating in 2018-19 and 2019-20 programming.^{4, 5}

Funding for the TIB program continued during the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years.⁶ In 2021-22, six schools participated in the program. One of the six schools, William H. Loesche Elementary School, had participated in the three years prior (see Appendix A for a summary of the 2021-22 evaluation). Two of the six schools withdrew from programming during the 2021-22 school year; both cited capacity challenges as reasons for withdrawing.

In 2022-23, four professional development sessions and coaching were provided to four participating schools:

1. Lewis Elkin Elementary School
2. William H. Loesche Elementary School
3. Andrew J. Morrison Elementary School
4. Hon. Luis Muñoz Marín Elementary School.

All four PDs in 2022-23 were held in person. Lead co-teachers continued to receive professional development and coaching from SupportEd, with the nature of the coaching shifting toward “training the trainer.” Two of the participating schools, Loesche and Elkin, opted to add a second co-teaching partnership with lead co-teachers providing training.

This report focuses on the final year of grant-funded TIB program implementation (2022-23) in order to understand program implementation and participants’ experiences with the program, and to inform future supports for teaching EL students and co-teaching.

What We Did

The Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) administered six surveys: a pre-program survey, a post-program survey, and surveys after each of the four professional development sessions (Table 1).

⁴ For more information on the implementation and outcomes of the Together is Better program from 2017-2020 see: <https://www.philasd.org/research/2020/11/13/implementation-and-outcomes-of-the-together-is-better-program-2017-20/>

⁵ Together is Better programming was interrupted during the 2019-20 school year due to school closures caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

⁶ The Together is Better program is funded by a grant from the William Penn foundation.

Table 1. Surveys administered during the 2022-23 Together is Better program year

Survey	Administration	Respondents	Response Rate	Topic
Pre-program	October 2022	13 out of 13 <i>This survey was sent to 10 teachers and 3 OMCP staff.</i>	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration and instructional practices⁷ • Beliefs related to EL instruction and their school's approach to teaching EL students
Professional Development 1	October 2022	13 out of 13 <i>This survey was sent to 10 teachers and 3 OMCP staff.</i>	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions of the overall quality of PD • Perceptions of PD content • Perceptions of PD processes
Professional Development 2	November 2022	9 out of 10 <i>This survey was sent to teachers only.</i>	90%	
Professional Development 3	March 2023	9 out of 10 <i>This survey was sent to teachers only.</i>	90%	
Professional Development 4	May 2023	10 out of 12 <i>This survey was sent to 9 teachers and 3 OMCP staff.</i>	83%	
Post-program	May 2023	9 out of 19 <i>This survey was sent to 10 teachers, 6 school administrators, and 3 OMCP staff.</i>	47%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration and instructional practices • Beliefs related to EL instruction and their school's approach to teaching EL students • Experiences with TIB coaching • Challenges and supports related to co-teaching

⁷ Some survey questions were adapted from The Promoting Cultural and Linguistic Competency Self-Assessment Checklist for Personnel Providing Services and Supports in Early Intervention and Early Childhood Settings, developed by Tawara D. Goode at the National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University. For a copy of this checklist see: <https://nccc.georgetown.edu/documents/ChecklistEIEC.pdf>

This report uses data from the four PD surveys in order to understand participants' perceptions of TIB PD. It also uses data from the post-program survey to describe program implementation and understand participants' beliefs about teaching EL students, their school's approach to teaching EL students, and co-teaching in general.

Research Questions

This report answers the following questions related to Together is Better implementation and instructional outcomes:

1. To what extent were teachers satisfied with the support provided by SupportEd?
2. To what extent did teachers collaborate and engage in practices that result in quality instruction in support of ELs?
3. What are participants' beliefs about teaching EL students and their school's approach to teaching EL students?
4. What did participants perceive to be the benefits of and challenges to co-teaching, and what supports are needed for co-teaching in general?

Results

The Together is Better program was a small initiative that served 10 teachers in 2022-23. Because only 10 teachers completed the pre-survey and six teachers completed the post-survey, the opportunity for evaluators to draw meaningful conclusions about implementation and participants' practices and beliefs was limited. Furthermore, not all six participants who took the post-survey had also taken the pre-survey, which means the differences between answers to the same, or similar, questions on each survey do not necessarily represent changes in participants' opinions or experiences over the course of the TIB program. We do know, however, that TIB participants who completed the survey were satisfied with the program, and that a majority of respondents engaged in instructional and teaching practices to support EL students at least weekly.

To what extent were teachers satisfied with the support provided as part of the Together is Better program (including professional development sessions and coaching)?

The Together is Better program included two related components: (1) four professional development sessions at four points during the school year and (2) coaching throughout the school year. The four PD surveys provide information on participant perceptions of PD content and process, and the post-survey provides information on participant perceptions of coaching.

Professional Development

In all four PD sessions (October, November, March, and May) all respondents strongly agreed or agreed with positive statements about PD content (Table 2).

Table 2. Percentage of respondents who strongly agreed with statements about the content of the four PD sessions from October 2022 to May 2023

	October PD 1 (N=9)	November PD 2 (N=9)	March PD 3 (N=9)	May PD 4 (N=7)
I plan to use what I learned about co-teaching.	89%	78%	89%	100%
I am confident I can implement what I learned.	89%	78%	89%	100%
The content of this PD was relevant to my practice.	100%	78%	100%	100%
The facilitators helped me understand how to implement what I learned.	89%	78%	89%	100%
This professional development was tailored to the context of my classroom/schools.	100%	78%	100%	100%
This professional development provided me with useful tools and materials.	89%	78%	89%	100%
The PD goals and objectives were clearly specified.	100%	78%	89%	100%
The materials used were accessible and enhanced my learning.	89%	78%	89%	100%

Source: 2022-23 Together is Better professional development 1-4 surveys

Note: The response options for these questions included “Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “Disagree,” and “Strongly Disagree.” All respondents selected “Strongly Agree” or “Agree.” Administrators only took the October and May surveys and are thus not included in this table.

In all four PD sessions (October, November, March, and May) all respondents strongly agreed or agreed with positive statements about the process of the PD (Table 3); no participants indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 3. Percentage of respondents who strongly agreed with statements about the process of the four PD sessions from October 2022 to May 2023

	October PD 1 (N=9)	November PD 2 (N=9)	March PD 3 (N=9)	May PD 4 (N=7)
Time was used efficiently and effectively.	89%	78%	100%	100%
New practices were thoroughly explained and modeled.	89%	78%	89%	100%
Sufficient time was provided for guided practice and tasks.	89%	100%	89%	100%
The professional development activities were carefully planned and well organized.	89%	78%	100%	100%
The facilitators were engaging.	89%	89%	100%	100%
The facilitators were knowledgeable and helpful.	89%	89%	89%	100%

Source: 2022-23 Together is Better professional development 1-4 surveys

Note: The response options for these questions included “Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “Disagree,” and “Strongly Disagree.” All respondents selected “Strongly Agree” or “Agree.” Administrators only took the October and May surveys and are thus not included in this table.

Coaching

On the post-survey, general education/classroom teachers and ESL teachers were asked questions about their experiences with TIB coaching during the 2022-23 program year. The response options for these questions included “Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “Disagree,” and “Strongly Disagree.” All six respondents expressed satisfaction with coaching and their relationship with their coach, and felt aspects of coaching were helpful. For each of the following statements, five of the six respondents selected “Agree” and one of the six respondents selected “Strongly Agree”:

- I am satisfied with the coaching model.
- I am satisfied with the support I received from my coach.
- Overall, my relationship with my coach was positive.
- Overall, my relationship with my coach was helpful.
- My coach helped my co-teaching competencies.

Respondents were also asked questions about the knowledge and skills developed through the TIB coaching model. The response options for these questions included “Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “Disagree,” and “Strongly Disagree.” Five of the six respondents agreed and one strongly agreed that coaching developed their knowledge and skills around planning, instruction, assessment, and reflection.

The 2022-23 Together is Better post-program survey asked general education/classroom teacher and ESL teacher respondents three open-ended questions about coaching. A total of four of the nine post-survey respondents provided specific feedback about their experience with coaching. Below are the comments provided.

Four respondents provided feedback to the question: *In what ways do you think coaching has been beneficial to your teaching practice?*

- “Especially this year, feedback from my coach was the only feedback I received on my teaching practice. [My coach] was very positive and supportive, which encouraged me to try new things and to do what was in the best interest of my students.”
- “helped to give valuable feedback and a sounding board for different ideas”
- “Coaching has given me an opportunity to work on my practice as a teacher. Teaching lessons and getting feedback to improve a practice or even try new ideas is optimal. I like having a professional conversation about what worked and what can be improved or changed. This has opened me as an educator to receiving constructive criticism in a non-threatening way. This is a definite positive as not all teachers have this opportunity to grow and learn.”
- “meeting with various EL teachers discussing what works”

Three respondents provided feedback to the question: *Please describe any challenges you have faced, if any, in regards to coaching.*

- “The only challenges were school-based. For example, my schedule changing and having to reschedule my coach's visit.”
- “none”
- “No- [My coach] is awesome and an asset to the TIB grant.”

One respondent provided feedback to the question: *What supports could be provided to mitigate the challenges described above?*

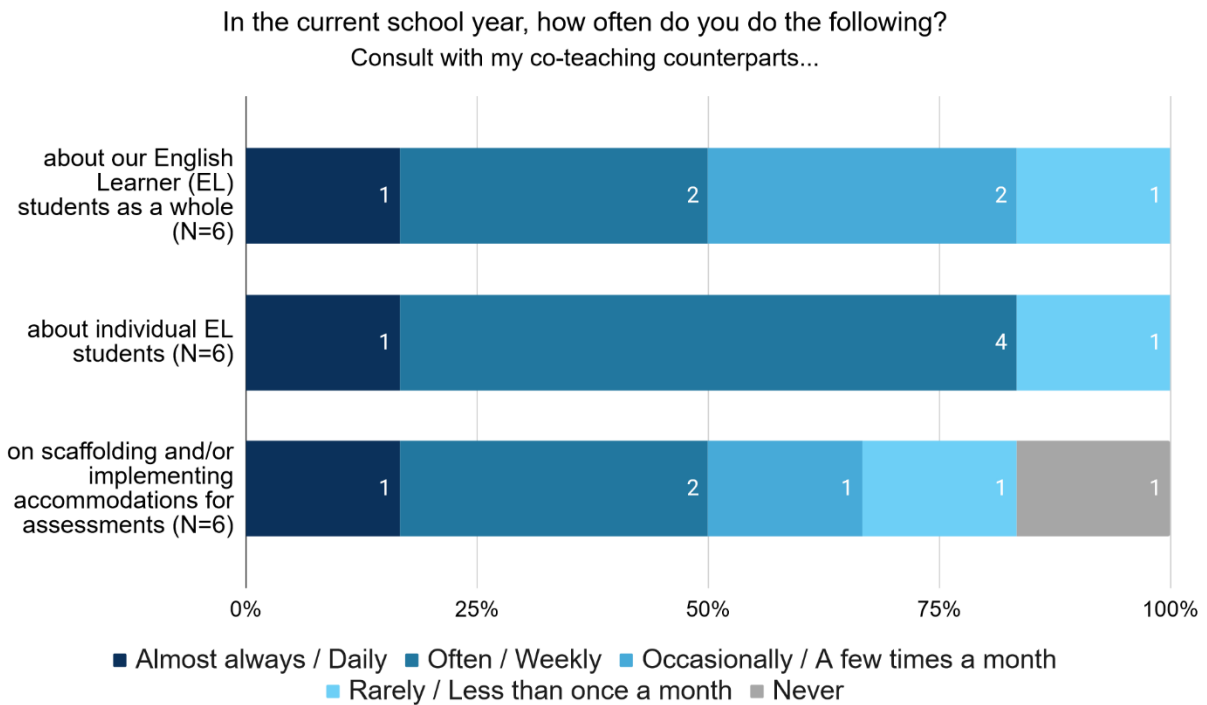
- “I believe that if we had the support from admin around the program there would have been less challenges.”

To what extent did teachers collaborate and engage in practices that result in quality instruction in support of ELs?

On the 2022-23 Together is Better post-program survey, general education/classroom teachers and ESL teachers were asked questions about the frequency in which they participated in various collaborative practices with their general education or ESL counterparts. As a reminder, the wording of questions varied slightly depending if the respondent was a general education or ESL teacher. For example, general education teachers saw “consult with an ESL teacher about our English Learner (EL) students as a whole” while ESL teachers saw “consult with general education teachers about our English Learners (ELs) as a whole.”

Half of the six respondents indicated that they consulted with their co-teaching counterparts about EL students as a whole, and consulted with their co-teaching counterparts on scaffolding and/or implementing accommodations for assessments, “almost always/daily” or “often/weekly.” Five out of the six respondents (84%) indicated that they consulted with their co-teaching counterparts about individual EL students “almost always/daily” or “often/weekly” (Figure 1).

Figure 1. General education/classroom teacher and ESL teacher responses about consulting with co-teachers



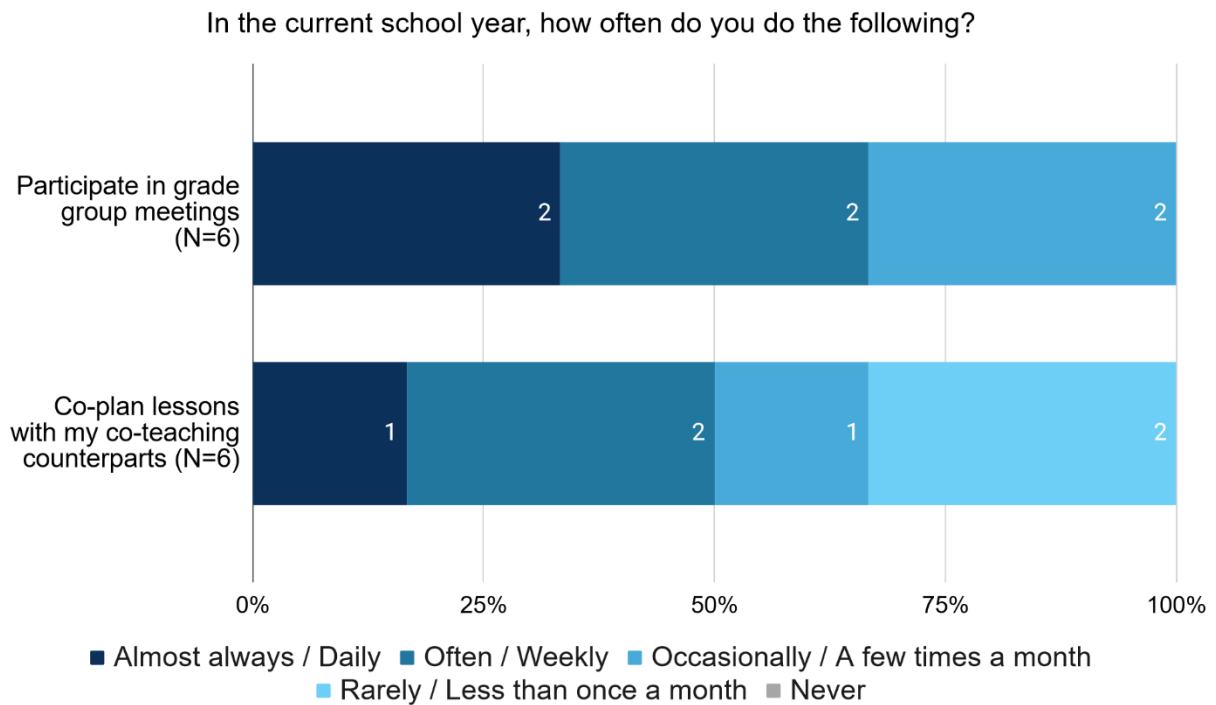
Source: 2022-23 Together is Better post-program survey

Note: Only general education/classroom teacher and ESL teacher respondents were asked questions about consultation with their co-teaching counterparts.

How to read this figure: The bar graphs are displayed on a scale of 0 to 100%, but due to the small N sizes the count of individual responses is included as an additional guide for interpreting the data.

Four of the six respondents (66%) indicated that they participated in grade group meetings “almost always/daily” or “often/weekly.” Half of the six respondents indicated that they co-planned lessons with their co-teaching counterparts “almost always/daily” or “often/weekly” (Figure 2).

Figure 2. General education/classroom teacher and ESL teacher responses about meeting and co-planning



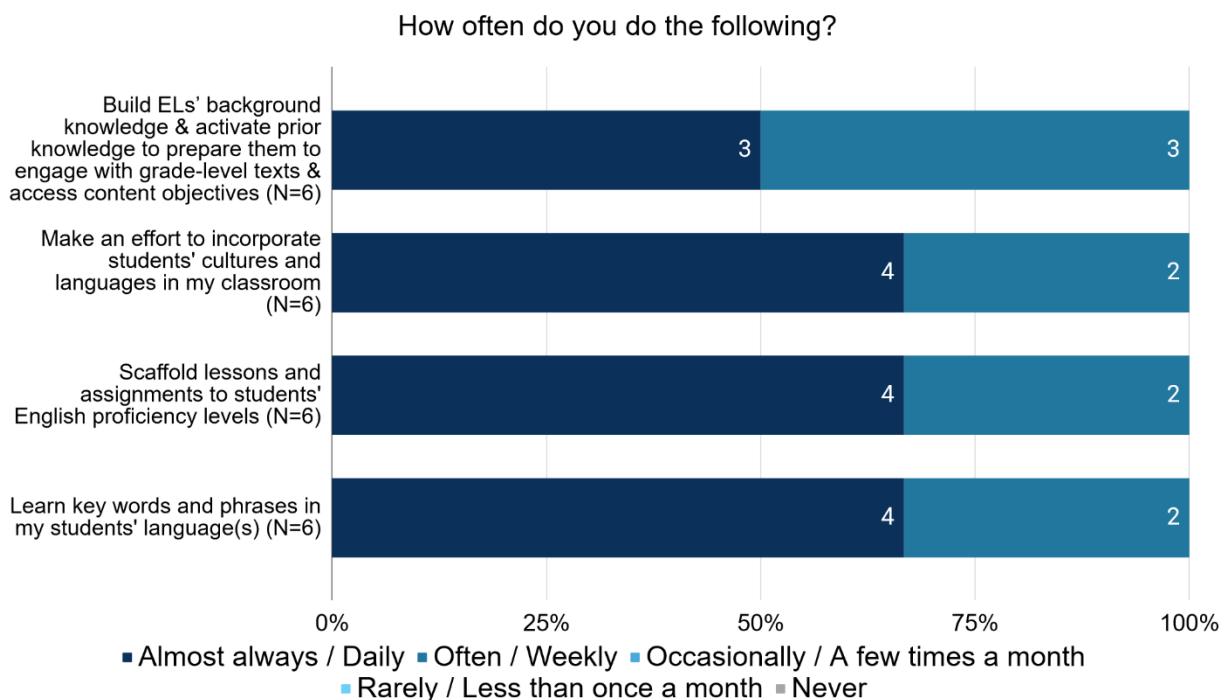
Source: 2022-23 Together is Better post-program survey

Note: Only general education/classroom teacher and ESL teacher respondents were asked questions about collaboration.

How to read this figure: The bar graphs are displayed on a scale of 0 to 100%, but due to the small N sizes the count of individual responses is included as an additional guide for interpreting the data.

A series of questions on the 2022-23 Together is Better post-program survey asked general education/classroom teachers and ESL teachers to self-report how often they engaged in specific instructional practices. All six respondents indicated they did the following “almost always/daily” or “often/weekly”: (1) Build EL students’ background knowledge and activate their prior knowledge to prepare them to engage with grade-level texts and access content objectives; (2) Make an effort to incorporate students’ cultures and languages in their classroom; (3) Scaffold lessons and assignments to students’ English proficiency levels; (4) Learn key words and phrases in students’ language(s) (Figure 3).

Figure 3. General education/classroom teacher and ESL teacher use of practices to support EL students



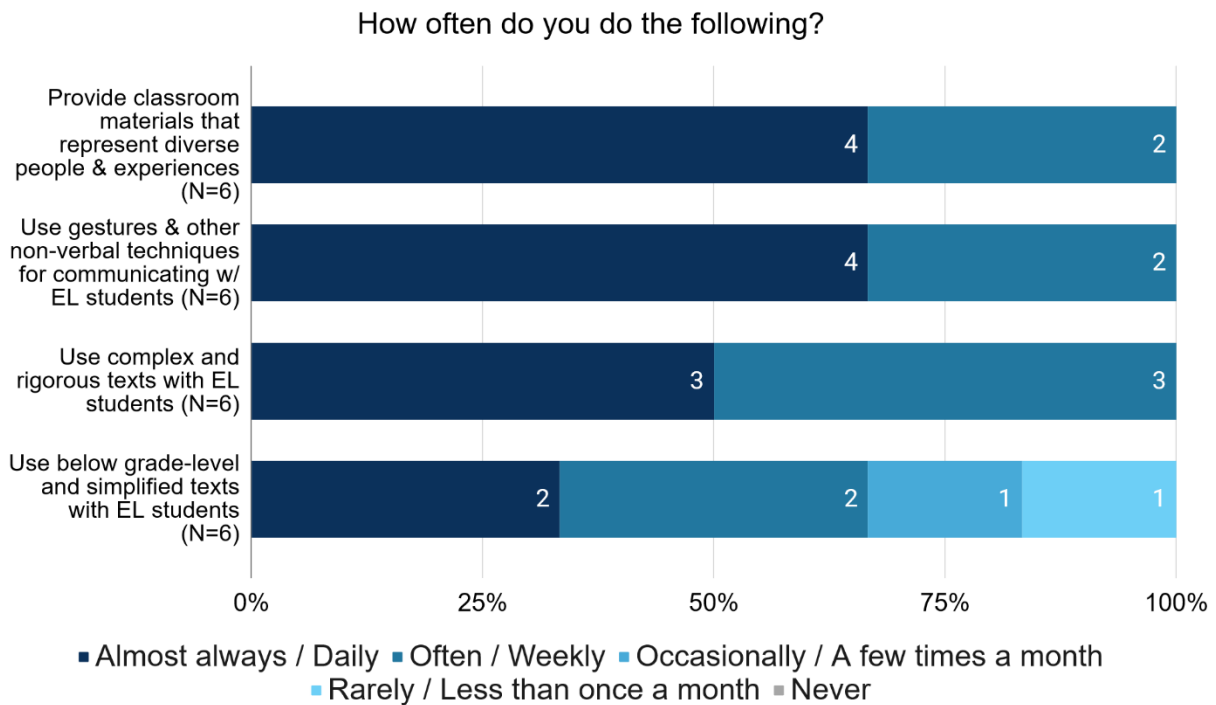
Source: 2022-23 Together is Better post-program survey

Note: The response options for these questions included “Almost always/Daily,” “Often/Weekly,” “Occasionally/A Few times a month,” and “Rarely/Less than once a month.” All respondents selected “Almost always/Daily” or “Often/Weekly.” Only general education/classroom teacher and ESL teacher respondents were asked questions about instructional practices.

How to read this figure: The bar graphs are displayed on a scale of 0 to 100%, but due to the small N sizes the count of individual responses is included as an additional guide for interpreting the data.

The post-program survey also asked teachers to self-report how often they used specific strategies during their teaching that support EL students in accessing content. All six respondents indicated they did the following “almost always/daily” or “often/weekly”: (1) provide classroom materials that represent diverse people and experiences; (2) use gestures and other non-verbal techniques for communicating with EL students; (3) use complex and rigorous texts with EL students. Four of the six respondents (66%) indicated that they use below grade-level and simplified texts with EL students “almost always/daily” or “often/weekly” (Figure 4).

Figure 4. General education/classroom teacher and ESL teacher use of teaching practices for EL students



Source: 2022-23 Together is Better post-program survey

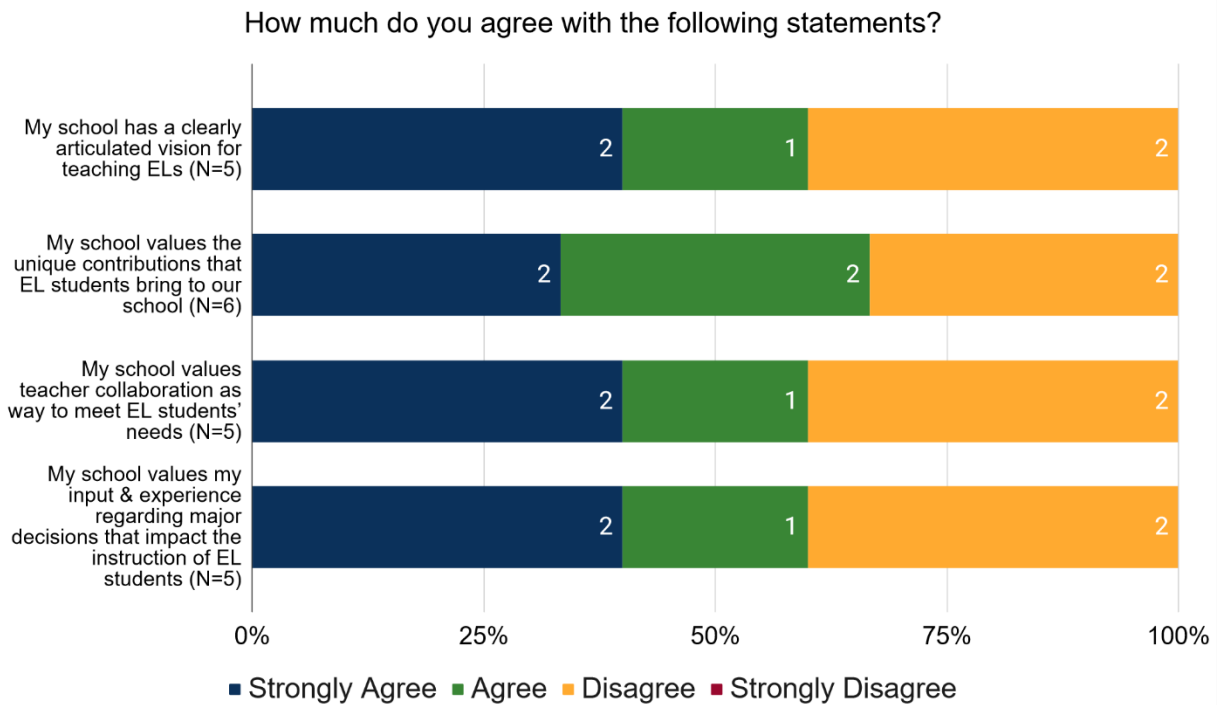
Note: Only general education/classroom teacher and ESL teacher respondents were asked questions about teaching.

How to read this figure: The bar graphs are displayed on a scale of 0 to 100%, but due to the small N sizes the count of individual responses is included as an additional guide for interpreting the data.

What are participants' beliefs about their school's approach to teaching EL students?

The post-program survey contained questions that asked teachers to reflect on their school's orientation toward EL students. Three of five respondents (60%) strongly agreed or agreed that (1) their school has a clearly articulated vision for teaching ELs; (2) their school values teacher collaboration as a way to meet EL students' needs; and (3) their school values their input and experience regarding major decisions that impact the instruction of EL students. Four of six respondents (67%) strongly agreed or agreed that their school values the unique contributions that EL students bring to their school (Figure 5).

Figure 5. General education/classroom teacher and ESL teacher responses about their school’s approach to teaching EL students



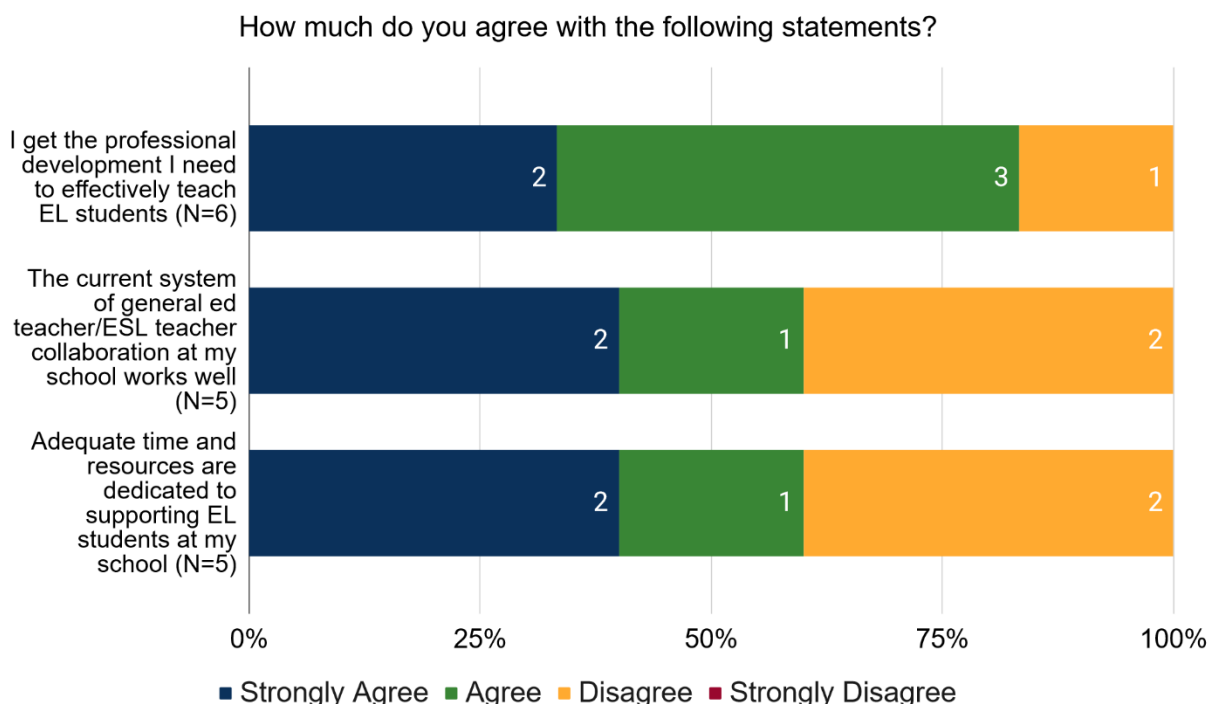
Source: 2022-23 Together is Better post-program survey

Note: Only general education/classroom teacher and ESL teacher respondents were asked questions about their school’s approach to EL students.

How to read this figure: The bar graphs are displayed on a scale of 0 to 100%, but due to the small N sizes the count of individual responses is included as an additional guide for interpreting the data.

The post-program survey also asked teachers to reflect on their school’s approach to collaboration and professional development in support of EL students. Five of six respondents (83%) strongly agreed or agreed that they get the professional development they need to effectively teach EL students. Three of five respondents (60%) agreed or strongly agreed that (1) the current system of general ed teacher/ESL teacher collaboration at their school works well; and (2) adequate time and resources are dedicated to supporting EL students at their school (Figure 6).

Figure 6. General education/classroom teacher and ESL teacher responses about their school’s approach to collaboration and professional development in support of EL students



Source: 2022-23 Together is Better post-program survey

Note: Only general education/classroom teacher and ESL teacher respondents were asked questions about their school’s approach to approach to collaboration and professional development in support of EL students.

How to read this figure: The bar graphs are displayed on a scale of 0 to 100%, but due to the small N sizes the count of individual responses is included as an additional guide for interpreting the data.





















To what extent did participants’ beliefs about teaching EL students change after the TIB program year?

In this section, we examined the pre- and post-program surveys to assess changes in participant agreement with statements regarding their own skills and resources for collaboration and co-teaching in support of English Learner (EL) students following participation in Together is Better. It is important to note that because just 10 teachers participated in the TIB program and only six teachers participated in the post-survey, the sample size is very small. Not all six participants who took the post-survey had also taken the pre-survey, which means the differences between answers to the same, or similar, questions on each survey do not necessarily represent changes in participants’ opinions or experiences over the course of the TIB program.

On both the pre- and post-surveys, all respondents strongly agreed or agreed that teaching English Learners (ELs) is a shared responsibility among all teachers, and all strongly agreed or agreed that

co-teaching as a valuable instructional model for this purpose. Additionally, all participants strongly agreed or agreed that they have productive co-teaching partnerships characterized by clear allocations of responsibilities and avenues for feedback, both before and after participation in Together is Better. Moreover, participants indicated a strong understanding of the knowledge and strategies necessary to effectively teach EL students, as evidenced by their agreement on both surveys. However, some respondents indicated a need for additional materials to effectively teach EL students (Table 4).

Table 4. Respondents who strongly agreed or agreed with statements about their preparedness to teach EL students before and after the program year

	Before TIB (N=10)	After TIB (N=6)
Teaching ELs is the shared responsibility of all teachers.		
Co-teaching is a valuable instructional model for teaching ELs.		
I have had a productive working relationship with my teaching counterpart.		
In my current co-teaching partnership, my partner and I have decided on a clear allocation of responsibilities.		
In my current co-teaching partnership, my partner and I are both open to giving and receiving feedback.		
I have the knowledge and strategies I need to effectively teach EL students.		
I have had adequate time to co-plan or consult with my teaching counterpart at my school.		
I get the professional development I need to effectively teach EL students.		
I am comfortable working in a co-teaching instructional setting.		
I have the materials I need to effectively teach EL students.		



















Source: 2022-23 Together is Better pre- and post-program surveys

Note: Only general education/classroom teacher and ESL teacher respondents were asked questions about their co-teaching partnerships.

How to read this table: Each row includes a statement and a circle illustrating the number out of ten respondents who strongly agreed and agreed with that statement before the TIB program and the number out of six respondents who strongly agreed or agreed with that statement after the TIB program. For example, both before and after TIB, all respondents strongly agreed or agreed that teaching ELs is the shared responsibility of all teachers. Eight of ten respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they have the materials they need to effectively teach EL students before TIB, but only four out of six after TIB.

All respondents felt that EL students are positive contributors to the classroom and that they should be encouraged to continue developing and using their native language(s), as evidenced by their agreement on the pre- and post-survey. All respondents also strongly agreed or agreed that their EL students routinely collaborate and interact with both ELs and native English speakers throughout the day, both before and after participation in Together is Better (Table 5).

Table 5. Percentage of respondents who strongly agreed or agreed with statements about EL student experiences in the classroom and their perceptions about EL students before and after the program year

	Before TIB (N=10)	After TIB (N=6)
Our EL students are positive contributors to our classroom.	 10	 6
Our EL students should be encouraged to continue developing and using their native language(s), both spoken and in literacy.	 10	 6
Our EL students routinely collaborate and interact with both ELs and native English speakers throughout the day.	 10	 6
Our EL students bring unique strengths and knowledge to the classroom.	 10	 5
Our EL students are just as interested and engaged in academic content as their non-EL peers.	 8	 5
Our EL students' needs are being met.	 8	 4
Our EL students participate equally in the classroom.	 8	 4
Our EL students are learning content at the same level as their non-EL peers.	 8	 4
Our EL students show a positive attitude toward making mistakes as they learn English.	 8	 4

Source: 2022-23 Together is Better pre- and post-program surveys

How to read this table: Each row includes a statement and a circle illustrating the number out of ten respondents who strongly agreed and agreed with that statement before the TIB program and the number out of six respondents who strongly agreed or agreed with that statement after the TIB program. For example, both before and after TIB, all respondents strongly agreed or agreed their EL students are positive contributors to our classroom. Eight of ten respondents strongly agreed or agreed that their EL students show a positive attitude toward making mistakes as they learn English before TIB, but only four out of six after.

What did participants perceive to be the benefits of and challenges to co-teaching, and what supports are needed for co-teaching in general?

The 2022-23 Together is Better post-program survey asked general education/classroom teachers, ESL teachers, school administrators, and OMCP staff questions about co-teaching in general. Respondents answered four open-ended questions about co-teaching. A total four of the nine post-survey respondents provided specific feedback about their experience with co-teaching. Below are the comments provided.

Four respondents provided feedback to the question: *In what ways do you think co-teaching has been beneficial for your school or classroom?*

- “The students in my TIB classroom were able to see two teachers as true equals in their classroom. Therefore, all students benefited from the EL supports that were in place. It was not a situation where one teacher had the feeling that these are ‘my kids’ and ‘your kids.’”
- “Collaborative practices have made a positive impact on our students.”
- “All the students feel welcome and part of the class. It has built a community of learners in my classroom. We help each other in all ways in the classroom. It definitely created a family atmosphere.”
- “It gave teachers ways to co-teach and provided them time to collaborate and get to know each other.”

Two respondents provided feedback to the question: *What challenges have you faced, if any, in regards to Together is Better or co-teaching generally?*

- “I think the co-teaching model works best when the two teachers are able to be together for at least half the day. Most days I am only able to spend 45 minutes with my TIB partner in her class. Since I push into several classrooms, it is difficult to be truly collaborative with each teacher.”
- “Scheduling for planning (co-teaching, not TIB).”

One respondent provided feedback to the question: *What other resources or supports, not including Together is Better, could support co-teaching?*

- “Offering QTEL training for teachers would build on the knowledge gained through TIB. If we could get enough ESOL teachers, then co-teaching at [our school] could continue. We have a large population of ELL students, and this would continue to support them. As of next year, we will not have co teachers as in the past due to the growth of our ELL population.”

Two respondents provided feedback to the question: *What else do you want to tell us about Together is Better or co-teaching?*

- “I am so thankful for the TIB program and especially our coach.... Sometimes the work that I do in my school goes unnoticed. I am so grateful to have received feedback and suggestions for my lessons. I’m also grateful for the support for the co-teaching model, which I do not believe is valued in my school.”
- “I loved the experience of co-teaching and wish it would continue because this is the only way to meet the needs of our students in the future.”

Conclusions

Overall, respondents were satisfied with the professional development and coaching support that Together is Better provided. Respondents also reported using what they learned through professional development and coaching. The majority of respondents reported that they consulted and collaborated with their co-teaching counterparts at least “occasionally/a few times a month” during the program year. All respondents reported that they engaged in instructional practices to support ELs at least weekly during the program year, and a majority of respondents used teaching practices to support ELs at least weekly. In addition, participants felt positively about their school’s approach to teaching EL students and their school’s approach to collaboration and professional development in support of EL students during the program year.

We compared the 2022-23 Together is Better pre-program and post-program surveys to see how responses changed after the program year. As stated earlier, it is important to note that the sample size is small, and only six teachers participated in the post-survey. Additionally, not all six participants who took the post-survey had also taken the pre-survey, which means the differences between answers to the same, or similar, questions on each survey do not necessarily represent changes in participants’ opinions or experiences over the course of the TIB program.

On both the pre- and post-program surveys, respondents felt that teaching ELs is the shared responsibility of all teachers and that co-teaching was a valuable instructional model. All respondents felt that EL students are positive contributors to the classroom.

Challenges to co-teaching in support of ELs included adequate time for scheduling and planning, especially when working with multiple partners. Respondents also felt there were not enough ESL teachers for schools to use a co-teaching model.

The 2022-23 school year was the last of a two-year extension of the Together is Better program. Still, results from this evaluation have implications for co-teaching in support of EL students. First, respondents expressed that all students, not just EL students, benefitted from co-teaching and collaboration. Results indicate that it is important that both the general education/classroom teacher and the ESL teacher are perceived by students as equals within the classroom. Conversely, it is important that both teachers perceive EL students and non-EL students as their responsibility. It is also vital to provide teachers with time for planning with each co-teaching partner.

Appendix A: Evaluation of the Together is Better program, 2021-22

Adrienne Reitano, Senior Research Associate, Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE)

The following report is an adapted version of an internal memo summarizing 2021-22 Together is Better program evaluation results. The William Penn foundation extended the funding that piloted the Together is Better program 2017-2020 for the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years. This appendix report focuses on the first year of the two-year grant-funded TIB program implementation in order to understand participants' experiences with the program and program implementation in 2021-22. While this larger report focuses on the final year of the extension (2022-23), this appendix allows for a full picture of program implementation during the two-year extension.

What we did

The 2021-22 school year was the first year of a two-year extension for six schools, only one of which also participated in the program during the three years prior (Loesche). In October 2021, the Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) administered a pre-program survey to the general education and English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) teachers at the six participating schools. This same survey was administered again in June 2022. During the course of the school year, one school dropped out of the TIB program due to logistical challenges (Northeast Community Propel Academy), so the survey in the spring was only administered to teachers at the five remaining schools:

1. Julia DeBurgos Elementary School
2. Lewis Elkin Elementary School
3. William H. Loesche Elementary School
4. Andrew J. Morrison Elementary School
5. Hon. Luis Muñoz Marín Elementary School.

The survey was designed to gather information about teachers' collaboration and instructional practices and to learn more about teacher beliefs related to EL instruction. The survey was first administered in October before teachers received TIB support (pre-program) and then administered again in the spring on June 6, 2022 (post-program). ORE has prepared this memo to share the results of the survey administered in June (spring, post-program) and compare them to the results of the survey administered in October (fall, pre-program).

The survey was designed to measure teachers' instructional and collaborative practices and to gauge teacher opinions on the instruction of ELs in their school after implementation of the TIB model. Some additional questions were adapted from a self-assessment checklist developed by the National Center for Cultural Competence (NCCC) at Georgetown University (Goode, 2009). These questions are designed to help early childhood educators self-assess their ability to support students of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and were included to allow teachers to assess what they are currently doing to accommodate ELs.

Survey questions were worded slightly differently for ESOL and general education teachers (e.g. ESOL teachers saw “I have a productive working relationship with the classroom teachers at my school” while general education teachers saw “I have a productive working relationship with ESOL teachers at my school”). The survey constructs were the same for both types of teachers.

Results

A total of six participants completed the survey, including three ESOL teachers and three general education teachers, for a response rate of 60%.

Beliefs about EL Co-Teaching

Participants answered questions about their beliefs on EL co-teaching (Table A1). All or almost all of teachers agreed or strongly agreed with both statements in the fall and in the spring.

Table A1: TIB teachers strongly agreed or agreed to beliefs about co-teaching in the fall and spring

Question	Fall		Spring	
	Gen Ed Teachers (n=5)	ESOL Teachers (n=6)	Gen Ed Teachers (n=3)	ESOL Teachers (n=3)
Teaching ELs is the shared responsibility of all teachers.	80%	100%	100%	100%
Co-teaching is a valuable instructional model for teaching ELs.	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: 2021-22 Together is Better pre- and post-program surveys

Personal Skills and Resources

ESOL and general education teacher participants answered questions about their own skills and resources for collaboration and co-teaching in support of ELs (Table A2). The questions contained statements about personal skills and resources and the following response options: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree. While 100% of ESOL teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they have the knowledge and strategies to effectively teach EL students in both the fall and spring, only 66% agreed or strongly agreed in the spring that they get the professional development to effectively teach EL students. The percentage of general education teachers that agreed or strongly agreed that they get the PD they need went from 80% to 66% from fall to spring. The percentage of both general education and ESOL teachers who agreed or strongly agreed they have the materials they need to effectively teach ELs stayed relatively consistent from fall to spring.

Table A2: TIB teachers strongly agreeing or agreeing to statements about personal skills and resources in the fall and spring

Question	Fall		Spring	
	General education Teachers (n=5)	ESOL Teachers (n=6)	General education Teachers (n=3)	ESOL Teachers (n=3)
I have the knowledge and strategies I need to effectively teach EL students.	80%	100%	67%	100%
I have the materials I need to effectively teach EL students.	60%	67%	67%	67%
I get the professional development I need to effectively teach EL students.	80%	50%	67%	67%

Source: 2021-22 Together is Better pre- and post-program surveys

Collaboration Practices, Teaching Partnerships, and Teaching Practices

Participants answered questions about the frequency in which they participated in various collaborative practices with their general education or ESOL counterparts (Table A3). The questions listed various areas for collaboration, and the following response options: almost always/daily, often/weekly, occasionally/a few times a month, rarely/less than once a month, or never. In the fall, there were discrepancies between how often general education and ESOL teachers reported collaborating with general education/ESOL counterparts. For example, while 20% of general education teachers said they consult with their ESOL partner about individual EL students almost always or often, this was the case for 86% of ESOL teachers. In the fall, in four of the five practices, a higher percentage of ESOL teachers selected almost always or often, compared to general education teachers.

In the spring, responses from general education and ESOL teachers were the same for three of the five practices. However, higher percentages of general education teacher respondents reported they consult about individual EL students and scaffold for assignments almost always or often compared to ESOL teacher respondents.

Table A3: Self-reports of TIB teachers almost always or often engaging in collaboration practices with their general education/ESOL counterparts in the fall and spring

Question	Fall		Spring	
	general education Teachers (n=5)	ESOL Teachers (n=7)	general education Teachers (n=3)	ESOL Teachers (n=3)
Co-planning lessons	20%	14%	33%	33%
Consulting about ELs as a whole	20%	57%	67%	67%
Consulting about individual EL students	20%	86%	67%	33%
Participating in grade group meetings	40%	71%	67%	67%
Scaffolding and/or implementing accommodations for assessments	20%	43%	33%	0%

Source: 2021-22 Together is Better pre- and post-program surveys

Participants answered questions about their current relationship with their ESOL or general education colleague (Table A4). In the fall, higher percentages of general education teachers agreed or strongly agreed with each of the three statements, indicating they feel more positive relative to ESOL teachers. This was no longer the case in the spring, as 100% of general education and ESOL teacher respondents agreed or strongly agreed with two of the three statements.

Table A4: Self-reports of TIB teachers strongly agreeing or agreeing about their co-teaching partnerships in fall and spring

Question	Fall		Spring	
	general education Teachers (n=5)	ESOL Teachers (n=6)	general education Teachers (n=5)	ESOL Teachers (n=6)
I am comfortable working in a co-teaching instructional setting.	100%	83%	67%	100%
In my current co-teaching partnership, my partner and I have decided on a clear allocation of responsibilities.	60%	33%	100%	100%
In my current co-teaching partnership, my partner and I are both open to giving and receiving feedback.	100%	83%	100%	100%

Source: 2021-22 Together is Better pre- and post-program surveys

Participants answered two questions about their past relationship with their classroom or ESOL teachers (Table A5). While the majority of both general education and ESOL teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they have had a productive working relationship with their co-teacher, much lower percentages reported they have had adequate time to co-plan together.

Table A5: Self-reports of TIB teachers strongly agreeing or agreeing about their past co-teaching partnerships in the fall and spring

Question	Fall		Spring	
	general education Teachers (n=5)	ESOL Teachers (n=7)	general education Teachers (n=3)	ESOL Teachers (n=3)
In the past, I have had a productive working relationship with the classroom/ESL teachers at my school.	86%	100%	100%	67%
In the past, I have had adequate time to co-plan or consult with the classroom/ESL teachers at my school.	29%	40%	33%	0%

Source: 2021-22 Together is Better pre- and post-program surveys

The survey also contained questions about teachers' perception and beliefs about EL students (Table A6). In both the fall and spring, general education teacher respondents were equally or more likely to agree or strongly agree to the nine questions. In the fall, for both general education and ESOL teachers, less than half agreed or strongly agreed that their EL students' needs are being met, 40% and 33%, respectively. In the spring, 66% of general education teacher respondents reported their EL students' needs being met, but there was no change for ESOL teachers.

Table A6: Teachers strongly agreeing or agreeing about perceptions and beliefs about EL students in fall and spring

Question	Fall		Spring	
	general education Teachers (n=5)	ESOL Teachers (n=6)	general education Teachers (n=3)	ESOL Teachers (n=3)
Our EL students' needs are being met.	40%	33%	67%	33%
Our EL students participate equally in the classroom.	60%	33%	100%	33%
Our EL students bring unique strengths and knowledge to the classroom.	100%	100%	100%	100%
Our EL students are learning content at the same level as their non-EL peers.	80%	67%	100%	67%
Our EL students show a positive attitude toward making mistakes as they learn English.	100%	67%	100%	67%
Our EL students are positive contributors to our classroom.	100%	83%	100%	100%
Our EL students routinely collaborate and interact with both ELs and native English speakers throughout the day.	100%	67%	100%	100%
Our EL students are just as interested and engaged in academic content as their non-EL peers.	100%	100%	100%	100%
Our EL students should be encouraged to continue developing and using their native language(s), both spoken and in literacy.	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: 2021-22 Together is Better pre- and post-program surveys

A series of questions asked TIB teachers to self-report how often they engage in specific teaching practices (Table A7). In both the fall and spring, compared to ESOL teachers, equal or higher percentages of general education teachers reported almost always or often engaging in each of the teaching practices listed in this set of questions. In the spring, 100% of all teachers said they engaged in six of the eight practices.

Table A7: Self-reports of TIB teachers almost always or often engaging in teaching practices in fall and spring

Question	Fall		Spring	
	General education Teachers (n=5)	ESOL Teachers (n=6)	General education Teachers (n=3)	ESOL Teachers (n=3)
Provide classroom materials that represent diverse people and experiences	80%	67%	100%	100%
Use gestures and other non-verbal techniques for communicating with EL students	100%	100%	100%	100%
Use complex and rigorous texts with EL students	100%	83%	100%	67%
Use below grade-level and simplified texts with EL students	40%	33%	67%	33%
Build ELs' background knowledge and activate their prior knowledge to prepare them to engage with grade-level texts and access content objectives	100%	83%	100%	100%
Make an effort to incorporate students' cultures and languages in my classroom	100%	83%	100%	100%
Scaffold lessons and assignments to students' English proficiency levels	100%	100%	100%	100%
Learn key words and phrases in my students' language(s)	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: 2021-22 Together is Better pre- and post-program surveys

Teacher perceptions about their school's approach to education EL students

The survey also contained questions that asked teachers to reflect on their school's orientation toward EL students (Table A8). In both the fall and spring, higher percentages of general education teachers agreed or strongly agreed to the statements compared to their ESOL teacher peers. In the fall, only 17% of ESOL teachers agreed or strongly agreed that adequate time and resources are dedicated to supporting EL students at their school. This increased to 66% in the spring. However, in the spring, 0% of ESOL teacher respondents agreed that their school has a clearly articulated vision for teaching ELs.

Table A8: Teachers strongly agreeing or agreeing about their school's approach to EL students in fall and spring

Question	Fall		Spring	
	General education Teachers (n=5)	ESOL Teachers (n=6)	General education Teachers (n=3)	ESOL Teachers (n=3)
I get the support from school leaders that I need to effectively teach EL students.	60%	50%	100%	33%
My school values the unique contributions that EL students bring to our school.	100%	67%	100%	33%
My school values teacher collaboration as way to meet EL students' needs.	100%	67%	66%	33%
My school values my input and experience regarding major decisions that impact the instruction of EL students.	100%	83%	67%	33%
My school has a clearly articulated vision for teaching ELs.	60%	50%	67%	0%
The current system of general ed teacher/ESL teacher collaboration at my school works well.	60%	50%	100%	67%
Adequate time and resources are dedicated to supporting EL students at my school.	60%	17%	67%	67%

Source: 2021-22 Together is Better pre- and post-program surveys

Conclusions

General education and ESOL teachers from five TIB schools were surveyed in October before they received TIB professional development and again in June after receiving support. The surveys asked questions about teachers' collaboration and instructional practices and about their beliefs related to EL instruction.

Both general education and ESOL teachers felt positively toward the co-teaching model, with 100% of all respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with statements about their beliefs around co-teaching. However, in the spring in particular, ESOL teacher respondents did not report feeling positively about their schools' approach to EL students. This suggests that compared to ESOL teachers, general education teachers feel more positively about their school as an environment conducive to EL students' learning.

In regards to the two questions about their past relationship with their classroom or ESOL teachers, there was a decrease in the percentage of ESOL teachers that answered positively from fall to spring but an increase for general education teachers.

The survey also contained questions about teachers' perceptions and beliefs about EL students. For ESOL teachers, there was little to no change in the percentage that responded positively to seven of the nine statements. For the remaining two statements, there were increases. For general education teachers, there was a similar pattern; 100% of general education teacher respondents agreed with six of the nine statements in the fall and spring and for the remaining three statements, there were increases in the percentage that agreed from fall to spring.

Considering the series of questions that asked TIB teachers to self-report how often they engage in specific teaching practices, in the spring higher percentages of general education teachers reported almost always or often engaging in two of the teaching practices listed compared to their ESOL counterparts (using complex and rigorous texts with EL students and using below grade-level and simplified texts with EL students). For the remaining six practices, 100% of all teachers said they engaged in them almost always or often.